

HOUSE RESOLUTION 7003

By Hardaway

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Willie Mitchell of Memphis.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Willie Mitchell of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, a renowned music producer, Willie Mitchell was an innovator and key architect of the Memphis soul sound that is instantly recognizable on the works of such legendary artists as Al Green, Ann Peebles, and other stars of soul music; and

WHEREAS, born in Ashland, Mississippi, in 1928, Mr. Mitchell was a talented musician who began his career as a trumpeter, leading a ten-piece touring band while still in his teens, before establishing himself as an acclaimed performer in Memphis clubs with his sophisticated and jazzy style in the mid-1950s; and

WHEREAS, Willie Mitchell was signed to Hi Records as a recording artist in 1961 and from 1964 to 1969, released several hit records, including "Soul Serenade" and "30-60-90" while also making his mark as a producer and talent scout for the label, landing Ann Peebles and others; and

WHEREAS, while performing at a club in Midland, Texas, in 1968, Mr. Mitchell first encountered Al Green, who had been booked as his opening act. Upon hearing the aspiring singer rehearse, Willie Mitchell invited him to Memphis and promised to make him a star; and

WHEREAS, under Mitchell's guidance, Al Green became a star, and the pair charted thirteen Top 40 hit records between 1971 and 1976, showcasing Green's voice in front of Mitchell's sweet Memphis soul production style on such legendary singles as "Let's Stay Together", "Tired of Being Alone", and "Love and Happiness"; and

WHEREAS, recording at Royal Recording Studio, Mitchell created a distinctive style that generations of soul music lovers recognize as the Willie Mitchell sound, forever establishing him as one of the greatest record producers of all-time; and

WHEREAS, acquiring an ownership in Hi Records in 1970, Willie Mitchell remained with the company until it was sold in the late 1970s, of which time he bought Royal Studio and continued producing and working with a vast array of recording artists such as blues great Buddy Guy, rock and roll legend Rod Stewart, and contemporary hitmaker John Mayer; and

WHEREAS, Willie Mitchell was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by his two grandsons, Lawrence and Archie, whom he adopted as sons; his step-son, Archie Turner; his daughters, Yvonne and Lorrain Mitchell; and one granddaughter; and

WHEREAS, Willie Mitchell leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor the memory of Willie Mitchell, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Mitchell.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.